**Eighth Graders Donate Blankets to Project Linus**

*An eighth grade language arts class at West Lee Middle School, in Sanford, North Carolina, donates 15 blankets to Project Linus****.***

BY: JOSEPH ADCOCK

**SANFORD, NC**- February 13, 2009- Cynthia McFadden’s eighth grade class at West Lee Middle School, in Sanford, North Carolina, have been carrying blankets around for the past few weeks. You might think that they are trying to be like Linus from the “Peanuts” comic strip, and maybe they are. However, these students are not carrying the blankets for pleasure or for security; they are carrying these blankets to and from school in order to participate in a community service project that will help many seriously ill and traumatized children.

As part of a school project, the students crocheted security blankets and donated them to Project Linus, who will give the blankets to children in need. Project Linus was established in 1995, in Denver, Colorado, to provide security blankets to children with cancer who were being treated at the Rocky Mountain Children’s Cancer Center. ([www.projectlinus.org/index.html](http://www.projectlinus.org/index.html)) Today, the program has expanded from its small beginning, to having a chapter in every State and almost 400 chapters overall in the United States and Canada. Project Linus is a non-profit, volunteer organization that has two missions. The first mission is to “provide love, a sense of security, warmth, and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need through the gifts of new, handmade blankets…” according to the Project Linus’ national website. ([www.projectlinus.org/index.html](http://www.projectlinus.org/index.html)) The second goal of Project Linus is to “provide a rewarding and fun service opportunity for interested individuals and groups in local communities, for the benefit of children.”([www.projectlinus.org/index.html](http://www.projectlinus.org/index.html))

Ms. McFadden’s students were given time at school to crochet their security blankets, but also worked on the blankets at home. For most of the students, crocheting was easy, and they caught on fast. However, for some of Ms. McFadden’s students, it took a long time to figure out. Ms. McFadden feels that her students should learn about community service, and she also tells her students “that community service will look good on their résumé” when they one day go looking for jobs.\* McFadden is grading her students on their blankets and on their reports that deal with Project Linus. Using community service in connection with a language arts assignment accomplishes several goals in one project by teaching students about the importance of community service, doing research and writing about the community service project selected, and actually doing the community service, in this case crocheting the blankets.

It appears that Ms. McFadden’s class has taken the message of Project Linus to heart. The students had fun and helped children in need at the same time. Although Ms. McFadden’s class is small, they can still make a difference in a child’s life with the gift of the crocheted blankets. As these students grow into adults they will need to become a part of their communities. By introducing students to community service in school and showing them that it can be fun, a seed may be planted that will grow into a desire to continue to help others in need. Fun, learning, and community service, all wrapped into one package, or in this case, a blanket. What’s not to like?

\*Information or quote from Ms. McFadden in class

**Graphic Organizer for the Press Release**

Intro- Ms. McFadden’s 8th grade class has been carrying around blankets for the past few weeks, but not for pleasure. The students are donating them to Project Linus.

#1- The students are crocheting blankets to donate to Project Linus as part of a project. The two missions of Project Linus.

#2- Ms. McFadden wants her students to learn about community service, and she also feels it will look good on the students’ résumé’s.

Conclusion- It appears that Ms. McFadden’s class feels that community service is worthwhile. Ms. McFadden’s class had fun and helped children at the same time. Although small, this class can still make a difference in a child’s life.

**Bibliography**

Ms. McFadden

[www.projectlinus.org/index.html](http://www.projectlinus.org/index.html)

<http://www.free-press-release-center.info/sample-press-release.html>

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